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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
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Forty-fourth session
Agenda items 7 and 8

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER AND THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

THE REALIZATION OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Joint written statement submitted by the Women's International Democratic Federation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status (category I), by the American Association of Jurists, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, the International Indian Treaty Council, the General Arab Women Federation, the Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees, the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Union of Arab Jurists, non-governmental organizations in consultative status (category II), and by the World Peace Council, International Educational Development Inc., the Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples and the International Progress Organization, non-governmental organizations on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following communication, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[20 August 1992]

GE.92-13963/1086K (E)

1. On the basis of the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights, particularly the right to life and economic, social and cultural rights, the above-mentioned non-governmental organizations recall that the embargo that has been imposed on the people of Iraq for the past two years is still in force, despite the fact that the grounds for its establishment by the Security Council no longer exist (resolution 660 (1990) demands the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, but there have not been any Iraqi forces in that country since the end of February 1991).

2. All reports and humanitarian missions emphasize that, because of the embargo, infant mortality is increasing by 400 per cent every year. Psychological and physical consequences are affecting most of the surviving children as well as other categories of the population, because of the lack of medicine, food and basics such as school items and health products. Epidemics have broken out in various regions of Iraq because of the massive destruction of infrastructure and the lack of equipment and products needed for water purification and prevention of epidemics; these products are subject to a misinterpretation of the Security Council resolutions (for instance, medicines containing a particular chemical substance, detergents, insecticides, school items, eyeglasses, etc.) This embargo also affects the most disadvantaged strata of the population, particularly wage-earners in the private and public sectors: the lack of tools and raw materials generates both unemployment and inflation. For the past two years, inflation has exceeded 2,000 per cent thereby hampering the reconstruction which would provide an enormous amount of work.

3. To deprive Iraq in this manner of its means of production and the exploitation of its natural resources is to expose its population to inhuman living conditions. The destruction of Iraq's infrastructure is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations (by virtue of the fact that not all the possibilities of peaceful solution, as referred to in Article 1, paragraph 3, have been exhausted) and goes beyond the Security Council resolutions - resolution 678 (1990), authorizing the use of "all necessary means" to implement preceding resolutions does not imply the destruction of Iraq's infrastructure. Most members of the Security Council in fact recognize that Iraq has been applying most clauses of the Council resolutions since the cease-fire, yet the embargo is maintained in its entirety at the expense of the population. This interpretation of United Nations resolutions does not seem to be consistent with the spirit of the Charter, which seeks to promote peace amnong nations.

4. Consequently, the above-mentioned non-governmental organizations call upon the Sub-Commission at its forty-fourth session to take into consideration the serious human rights violations resulting from the embargo in Iraq and to do its utmost to secure the lifting of this embargo, which victimizes Iraq's civilian population.